The Cleveland Museum of Art

Press Release

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CLEVELAND MUSEUM ACQUIRES MAJOR CARRACCI PAINTING

The Cleveland Museum of Art has acquired Annibale Carracci's Boy Drinking, a spirited genre painting that embodies his dedication to the observation and depiction of the natural world--a "new" way of thinking and painting that helped to initiate the Baroque style. "The Carracci completes the circle of great Baroque painters at the Cleveland Museum," says Museum Director Robert P. Bergman. "It is arguably the most spontaneously painted picture of the 16th century and its creator is one of the great innovators in the Italian art of his time."

Boy Drinking joins Caravaggio's masterpiece, The Crucifixion of St. Andrew (1610), Zurbarán's The Holy House of Nazareth (ca. 1630), and Poussin's Holy Family on the Steps (1648), in Cleveland's distinguished European Baroque collections.

Painted around 1582-83, Boy Drinking depicts a young man holding a carafe of wine, as he drains the last of the wine in his upturned glass. The momentary pose is captured by fluent brush passages, with swirling impasto in the shimmering glass objects. The painting is a tour-de-force of believably depicted light and acutely observed behavior. One of the earliest true genre paintings, it is swiftly and surely executed, a masterly rendering of a simple scene from everyday life.

The painting was recognized as by Annibale Carracci (1560-1609) only in 1985, when it was bought by a London dealer, who sold it to the distinguished collector Peter Sharp. The Museum acquired Boy Drinking from the Sharp collection at auction at Sotheby's New York on January 13, 1994. The $2 million price was drawn from the Leonard C. Hanna, Jr., Fund.

Oil on canvas
22 x 14-1/4 inches (55.9 x 43.8 cm.)

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11150 EAST BOULEVARD, CLEVELAND, OHIO 44106-1797
TEL 216-421-7340 TDD 216-421-0018 FAX 216-421-0411